

## **I/WE CLAIM**

1. An oven rack for supporting a food item to be cooked in a oven cavity of an appliance comprising:

a frame portion including front, rear and opposing side rods, said front rod including first and second down-turned segments that are joined by a vertically offset portion; and

a support platform including a first plurality of spaced support members and a second plurality of spaced support members which are configured different from the first plurality of spaced support members, each of the first and second plurality of spaced support members extending between select ones of the front, rear and opposing side rods to establish both a food item support zone and a food item access zone, with said food item access zone being defined at the vertically offset portion to provide for exposure of a bottom portion of a food item placed upon the rack for cooking.

2. The oven rack according to claim 1, wherein the food item access zone is established vertically below a plane defined by the food item support zone.

3. The oven rack according to claim 2, wherein each of the second plurality of support members includes a bend portion, said bend portion at least partially defining the food item access zone.

4. The oven rack according to claim 3, wherein the first plurality of spaced support members extend in a common plane between the front and

rear rods, and the second plurality of support members extend from the rear rod through the bend portion to join the vertically offset portion.

5. The oven rack according to claim 4, wherein each of the second plurality of support members further includes an offset portion leading from the bend portion to the vertically offset portion.

6. The oven rack according to claim 5, wherein the offset portion of each of the second plurality of support members extends in a plane which is vertically below the common plane.

7. The oven rack according to claim 5, wherein the offset portion of each of the second plurality of support members extends less than one-half a depth of the support platform.

8. The oven rack according to claim 7, wherein the offset portion of each of the second plurality of support members extends less than one-quarter a depth of the support platform.

9. The oven rack according to claim 1, wherein the front rod also includes first and second frontal segments arranged laterally outwardly of the vertical offset portion.

10. The oven rack according to claim 9, wherein each of the second plurality of support members includes a bend portion, said bend portion at least partially defining the food item access zone and being directly joined to one of the first and second frontal segments.

11. The oven rack according to claim 9, wherein each of the first and second down-turned segments is spaced from a respective one of the opposing side rods.

12. The oven rack according to claim 11, further comprising: first and second in-turned segments formed in the front rod, each of said first and second in-turned sections leading from a respective one of the first and second frontal segments to a respective one of the first and second down-turned segments.

13. The oven rack according to claim 1, wherein the vertically offset portion establishes a handle adapted for use in shifting the oven rack relative to an oven cavity.

14. The oven rack according to claim 13, wherein the vertically offset portion is located centrally along the front rod.

15. The oven rack according to claim 1, wherein the support platform includes first and second, distinct food item access zones.

16. The oven rack according to claim 1, further comprising: at least one cross rod extending between said opposing side rods at a position spaced slightly forward of the rear rod.

17. The oven rack according to claim 1, wherein the food item support zone includes first and second food item support zone portions which are laterally spaced by the food item access zone.

18. A cooking appliance comprising:  
an oven cavity having top, bottom, rear and side walls; and  
an oven rack supported along the side walls of the oven cavity, said oven rack including:

a frame portion including front, rear and opposing side rods, said front rod including first and second down-turned segments that are joined by a vertically offset portion; and

a support platform including a first plurality of spaced support members and a second plurality of spaced support members which are configured different from the first plurality of spaced support members, each of the first and second plurality of spaced support members extending between select ones of the front, rear and opposing side rods to establish both a food item support zone and a food item access zone, with said food item access zone being defined at the vertically offset portion to provide for exposure of a bottom portion of a food item placed upon the rack for cooking in the oven cavity.

19. The cooking appliance according to claim 18, wherein the food item access zone is established vertically below a plane defined by the food item support zone.

20. The cooking appliance according to claim 18, wherein the front rod also includes first and second frontal segments arranged laterally outwardly of the vertical offset portion.